



Coronavirus Resources: Nutrition

American Rescue Plan

Oregon's U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley pushed for passage of President Biden's *American Rescue Plan* to get stimulus checks in Americans' bank accounts, help Main Street businesses stay afloat, and save the unemployment insurance program that 20 million Americans are relying on to make ends meet.

With this bill, urgently needed resources will be delivered to state, local, and tribal governments so they support the health of communities, and also pay firefighters, first responders, and other critical employees. Resources will go to schools and educators so they can safely get students back in the classroom. Resources will go to struggling families who are balancing work, school, and childcare from home. Resources will get personal protective equipment in the hands of frontline health heroes. And resources will mobilize a massive, national vaccine distribution plan to get shots into arms, and get past this pandemic.

Nutrition Resources in the Bill

- The American Rescue plan extends the 15 percent increase in monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits through September 2021.
 - The December COVID relief law also extended SNAP eligibility to college students who are eligible for a federal or state work study program or for certain types of federal student aid. If you have received Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, those benefits will not be counted toward household income for SNAP benefits or eligibility for the month of receipt and the following 9 months.
- \$24 million for the Secretary of Agriculture to expand and improve SNAP online purchasing and to modernize electronic benefit transfer (EBT) technologies.
- \$37 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which works to improve the health of low-income persons at least 60 years of age by supplementing their diets with nutritious USDA Foods
- The *American Rescue Plan* provides funding to temporarily **boost the value of the Cash Value Voucher (CVV) in the WIC program** up to \$35 per month for women and children for a four-month period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain program requirements are also being waived during the pandemic to increase access to benefits. The American Rescue Plan also provides \$390 million for outreach, innovation, and program modernization efforts for the WIC program.
- The *American Rescue Plan* allows the Pandemic EBT program to be implemented for any school year in which the COVID-19 public health emergency designation is in effect and allows for benefits to be extended through the summer.
 - This program was authorized under the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* to provide eligible school children with temporary emergency nutrition benefits loaded on EBT cards. Children who would have received free or reduced price meals if their schools were not closed or operating with reduced hours or attendance for at least 5 consecutive days are eligible to receive Pandemic EBT benefits.
- The *American Rescue Plan* also temporarily expands the age of eligibility for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) at emergency homeless shelters from 18 to 25 for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- \$750 million to support nutrition programs for older Americans under the *Older Americans Act*, and \$25 million for services, including nutrition, for Native American communities.

For updates: Visit merkley.senate.gov/coronavirus for updates on these and other resources.